



Put Yourself in Their Shoes

This activity is designed to help you investigate how successful entrepreneurs used their thinking skills to create a better idea than their competition.

Questions Questions Questions!!! Questions that you ask yourself about your business are essential to creating new ideas that are different from the existing way things are done. Questions provoke your mind to look for answers and ideas. The answers may not pop up immediately but persistence in asking questions and looking for answers is essential to creative answers and successful business ideas.

What are some of the questions you could ask if you want to become an entrepreneur?

What do I know how to do?

How could it be done better?

Who might pay me to do it?

What if I made it smaller? or a whole host of possibilities

What do the customers want?

How is the industry changing?

What customers are not being served?

Your Assignment:

There is no limit to the questions that can provoke a great creative idea. In this activity you will find a story of an entrepreneur and try to think of the questions this entrepreneur must have asked in order to come up with the idea that made his/her business successful. We recommend you look for these entrepreneurs' stories on our web page or in one of the following magazines that also have their own web pages:

INC Magazine	http://www.inc.com:80/
ENTREPRENEUR Magazine	http://www.entrepreneurmag.com
BLACK ENTERPRISE Magazine	http://www.blackenterprise.com
SUCCESS Magazine	http://www.successmagazine.com
EntrepreNews & Views	http://www.entre-ed.org/_teach.htm

Prepare a report to share with the class that identifies the entrepreneur and what made the business successful. Then create and share **a list of questions this entrepreneur might have used to provoke his creative thinking**. Ask for ideas from the group to add to your list.

Discuss how questions can trigger your mind out of its established ruts to think about new and different ways to do many things. Use questions to get your brain working in new and different ways to develop ideas of value.

Other Web Pages Relating to Creativity and Patents

A<http://www.edwdebono.com>≡ Learn how to think creatively from the works of Edward de Bono, an expert on how to encourage the mind to get out of the ruts and think new thoughts.

"<http://www.ibm.com/patents/>**"** IBM Patent Database A complete searchable database of all US Patents from 1971 to the present. Hypertext links are provided to referenced patents and publications. You can order copies on-line either in paper form or on custom CD-ROM (up to 800 patents on each CD).

"<http://www.whatagreatidea.com/>**"** What a Great IDEA! The book by Chic Thompson about key steps that creative people take. Also learn about "Killer Phrases" and how to prevent them from inhibiting your creativity.

"<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~caveman/Creative/index.html>**"** Creativity Home Page in Australia for an extensive list of books and references on creative problem solving, inventions and patents.

"<http://web.mit.edu/invent/>**"** MIT Invention Dimension for information on inventions, patents and the annual Lemelson Prize awards.

"<http://www.quantumbooks.com/bin/find?patent+OR+creativ>**"** Quantum Books Database on creativity

"<http://www.teleport.com:80/~wisdom1/>**"** WISDOM Consulting for a look at some unusual creative ideas.

"<http://www.goalqpc.com>**"** Description of the tools of creativity

"<http://www.baddesigns.com/>**"** Here is a great website for learning how NOT to do good design:

"<http://www.uspto.gov>**"** USA Patent & Trademark Office

"<http://www.spo.eds.com>**"** patent database

"<http://www.lightlink.com/bbm>**"** patenting and invention

"<http://www.ucc.uconn.edu/~bxb95001>**"** patenting

"<http://www.patents.com/patents.sht#searching>**"** How do I do a patent search?

"<http://medoc.gdb.org/repos/pat>**"** patent search

"<http://www.webcom.com/~lewrose/brochures/invent.html>**"** USA Federal Trade Commission on invention promotion scams

"<http://www.cas.org/support/dds.html>**"** Chemical abstracts

"<http://casweb.cas.org/chempatplus/>**"** Chemical abstracts, patents back to 1971

"<http://patent.womplex.ibm.com/>**"** USA patent search

"<http://www.inventnet.com>**"**